

Message Text

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R 280538Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4604

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 6203

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT PFOR ET (HAILE SELASSIE, EMPEROR)

SUBJECT: THE EMPEROR'S PHYSICAL CONDITION

REFS: ADDIS 6118 AND 6119

1. UNDERSTANDABLY, EPMG ANNOUNCEMENT REPORTED FIRST REFTEL WAS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY SPATE OF STORIES AMONG ORDINARY PEOPLE THAT THE EMPEROR WAS ALREADY DEAD AND THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MERELY INTENDED TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR THIS REVELATION IN MANNER THAT WOULD EXCULPATE THE DIRG.

2. WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE MAN-IN-THE-STREET IS NOW SHIFTING AWAY FROM THAT ASSESSMENT TOWARDS THE VIEW THAT THE EMPEROR IS CRITICALLY ILL AND MAY PASS AWAY AT ANY MOMENT. STORIES TO THAT EFFECT ARE AT PRESENT CIRCULATING WIDELY IN THE CAPITAL. SMALL CROWDS WERE OBSERVED AT THE CEREMONIAL ENTRANCE TO THE OLD GEBBI MAY 27 AND EMBASSY OFFICERS TOLD THAT THESE PEOPLE HAD GATHERED IN A VIGIL, ANTICIPATING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A FATAL OUTCOME. THERE IS AN UNDERCURRENT OF RESENTMENT AMONG SOME OF THESE PEOPLE ABOUT THE DIRG'S TREATMENT OF AN "OLD SICK MAN WHO HAS SERVED HIS COUNTRY FOR MANY YEARS, WHATEVER THE ERRORS HE
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MAY HAVE COMMITTED. . ."

3. WE HAVE NO RPT NO COLLATERAL ON THE RUMORED FURTHER DETERIORATION OF THE EMPEROR'S CONDITION AT THE PRESENT TIME. INSTEAD, WE HEAR THAT THE OPERATION IS NOW TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR THE PERIOD MAY 28-30, DEPENDING UPON THE PATIENT'S GENERAL CONDITION, BLOOD PRESSURE, ETC. REPORTEDLY, HIS PERSONAL PHYSICIAN, DR. ASRAT WOLDEYES, WILL OPERATE, ASSISTED BY PROFESSOR LEITHEAD. WE ARE STILL TRYING TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER OTHER SPECIALISTS ARE BEING BROUGHT IN. FOREGOING COMES FROM ONE "GOOD SOURCE" ONLY AND WE CONSIDER IT SOFT INFORMATION UNTIL WE OBTAIN AUTHORITATIVE CONFIRMATION.

HUMMEL

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